



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350

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MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
(INTELLIGENCE)

Subj: Cruise Missile Submarine Threat (U)

1. (C) At the briefing on 17 October 1968 on "Soviet Strategic Attack Forces (NIE 11-8-68)" given by OP-92 personnel, the Soviet Strategic Threat, as approved by the U.S. Intelligence Board after coordination with all U.S. Intelligence agencies and services, was presented.
2. (TS) Once again, the Soviet Cruise Missile Submarine Force Threat was stated to be directed primarily towards naval forces. Although their capability against land targets both in CONUS and overseas was noted, the Intelligence Community judgment was that their use against land targets in CONUS was unlikely. CNO expressed reservations on this judgment of enemy intentions and commented specifically on their value in a suppression role against land targets.
3. (TS) As a consequence of this and previous similar judgments of enemy intentions regarding use of SLCM's, OSD and other analysts have not, and probably will not, adequately consider the potential of the Soviet cruise missile submarine as a threat against CONUS-based strategic systems. For example, NIPP-68, dated January 1968, Summary Table A (Selected Elements of Soviet Strategic Attack Forces) does not include the submarine-launched cruise missile threat. The Strategic Force and Effectiveness Tables and DPMS, and an OSD (ISA) analysis of the effect of a freeze on strategic offensive and defensive systems related to the proposed Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, did not consider the cruise missile threat. Such calculations, on which our national security policies are based, become suspect when the entire possible threat is not considered. They become doubly suspect when, under certain scenarios, the U.S. must rely on SAC bombers for a part of the Assured Destruction role, since the 450-nautical-mile range SS-N-3 cruise missile launched from the 1,000 fathom curve around CONUS could reach 20 of 34 CONUS SAC bases with a high probability of a surprise attack. The SS-N-3

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could also be used against Sentinel, which could not defend itself from an SLBM attack. Further, it should be noted that the SS-N-3 capability has been subject to upgrading by the Soviets over the years and may not yet have obtained its maximum performance capabilities. Although it is possible that the primary mission of the Soviet submarine cruise missile force may be countering naval forces, it does have a dual capability and it is at least equally possible that the Soviets would use this force in a first strike role against CONUS targets because of the pay-off from their point of view.

4. (TS) The conservative calculations on which we base our Strategic Force planning should consider the added capability against land targets that Soviet cruise missile submarines provide. Accordingly, it is recommended that ACNO (Intelligence) take action to ensure that the capability of the cruise missile submarine as a strategic threat to CONUS is fully recognized within the Intelligence Community. The fact that submarine-launched cruise missiles can be employed effectively against land targets should be emphasized equally with their capability against naval forces, and they should be included in all assessments of Soviet strategic capability. Specifically it should be noted in intelligence documents, by the Navy as a minimum, that:

"Soviet cruise missile submarines have the dual capability of countering naval forces and of strategic nuclear attack against land targets. Although it is possible that their primary mission is anti-ship attack, it is equally possible that their intended use in a nuclear exchange is against land targets, particularly in a Soviet first strike scenario against CONUS."

Tables and charts depicting the Soviet strategic threat should also include the cruise missile submarine.

  
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